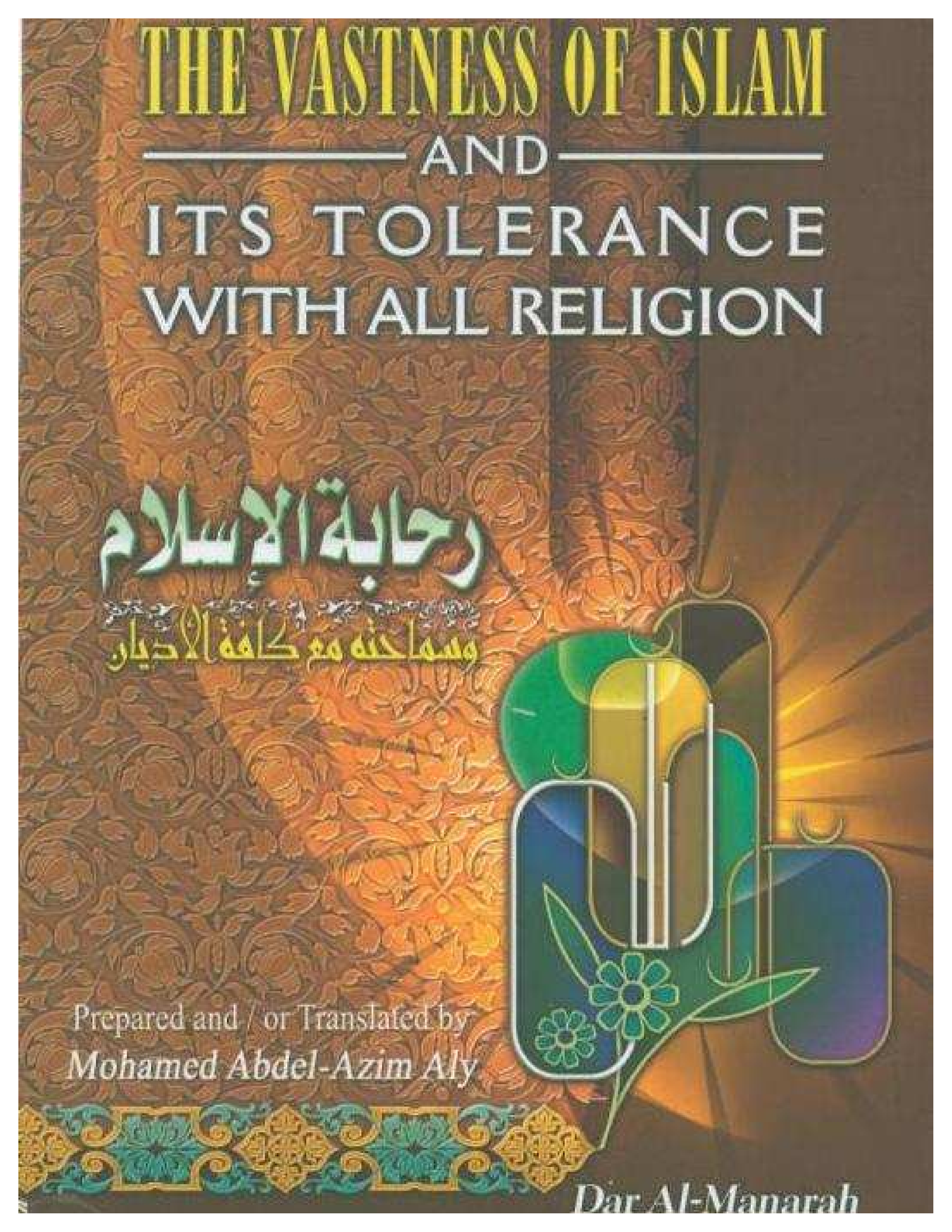

THE VASTNESS OF ISLAM
AND
ITS TOLERANCE
WITH ALL RELIGION
رحابة الإسلام
وسماحته مع كافة الأديان
Prepared and / or Translated by
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Dar Al-Manarah

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The Qur'an's Aim[1]

The Qur'an is a universal teaching which means the human being wherever he is and to whatever race he belongs. Constantly calling to reason, to the good sense and to the noble feelings. The Qur'an aims at purifying habits, clarifying creeds, bringing them nearer, dropping down racial barriers and national chauvinism, and replacing the law of truth and justice instead of law of violence. Although the Qur'anic doctrine took its flight in Arabia and has been diffused at first among the Arabs, but it is destined for the whole universe:

﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيراً﴾

{الفرقان: ١}

Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures; (25:1)

﴿إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾ {ص: ٨٧}

This is no less than a Message to (all) the Worlds. (38:87)

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(1) INITIATION TO THE QUR'AN, DR. M.DRAZ translated by Gamalat Zeidan, abridged and reviewed by Mohd. Abdel-Azim.

﴿وَمَا هُوَ إِلاَّ ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾ {القلم: ٥٢}

But it is nothing less than a Message to all the worlds. (68:52)

How the Qur'an did present the religious truth?

The first feature of the driving force of the Islamic preaching resides - in our opinion - in the manner in which it presented the religious truth and tried to cease the disputes about its subject.

In fact the Qur'an insists with much force and tenacity and affirms categorically not only that all the prophets constitute one and indivisible religious community under the aegis of their Lord:

﴿إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ﴾
{الأنبياء: ٩٢}

Verily, this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve Me (and no other). (21:92)

﴿وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ﴾ {المؤمنون: ٥٢}

And verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood. And I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore fear Me (and no other). (23:52)

But also that this unity was primitively that of all men but the successors were the ones who were disunited.

﴿وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلاَّ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا وَلَوْلا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ (١٩)﴾ {يونس}

Mankind was but one nation, but differed (later). Had it not been for a Word that went forth before from thy Lord, their differences would have been settled between them. (10:19)

And always consequent with itself, the Qur'an does not define Islam as a new Mohammedanism rivalling with Mosaicism and Christianism and disputing them the honour of veracity. But to be a Muslim means to belong at the same time to Moses, Jesus and all the divine messengers, mixing them all in the same respect and giving credit to all their teachings without any distinction between them (2:136,285/ 3:84 /4:152),

﴿قُـــلْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لاَ نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾﴾

{آل عمران}

Say: "We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham,Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord: we make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam)." (3:84)

or rather to belong to God and to follow His will which had successively been manifested on their tongues. From that moment, people will be over schism and rivalry and will find the equilibrium necessary to our interior tranquillity.

The Primitive Religious Unity

It is then to a return to the primitive unity that Qur'an calls. The union which all the good-natured souls cherish and desire as it plunges its roots in the creeds of our remorse ancestors.

That is why the Qur'an, beside the deductive argument, finds its doctrine of the unity of cult on the prophetic tradition of all the epochs (2:133; 3:79; 21:24-25; 22:78; 63:45).

﴿ أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِهِ آلِهَةً قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ هَذَا ذِكْرُ مَن مَّعِيَ وَذِكْرُ مَن قَبْلِي بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لاَ يَعْلَمُونَ الحَقَّ فَهُم مُّعْرِضُونَ (٢٤) وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنَا فَاعْبُدُون (٢٥) ﴾ {الأنبياء}

Or have they taken for worship (other) gods besides Him? Say, "Bring your convincing proof: this is the Message of those with me and the Message of those before me." But most of them know not the Truth, and so turn away. Not a messenger did We send before thee without this inspiration sent by Us to him: that there is no god but I; therefore worship and serve Me. (21:24-25)

In this way, reason and tradition contribute, according to the Qur'an, in establishing the cult of the One Unique God and in refuting the idolatry and the association under all their forms (46: 4).

Thus, with the idea of the fullness of divine attributes, The Qur'an has established the first part of the common religious doctrine,

namely, there is no but one unique object worthy of our worship.

The Dogma of the Future Life

As for the second part of the truth, i.e. the dogma of the future life, it is to Allah that we shall return (2:28) to render an account of our deeds and to be rewarded according to our merits (2:281). The Qur'an established it on the survival of the soul and the resurrection of the body.

﴿كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنتُمْ أَمْوَاتاً فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾﴾ {البقرة}

How can ye reject the faith in Allah? Seeing that ye were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return. (2:28)

As for the resurrection, the Qur'an founds it not only on a divine decree, this sort of obligation which God has made it a duty to Himself (16: 38), but also on the requirement of supreme justice and of the highest wisdom:

﴿لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي يَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَاذِبِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾﴾ {النحل}

"In order that He may make manifest to them the truth of that wherein they differ".(16:39)

and to reward to every one his deeds (65: 22). Otherwise, the creation of man will be vain (23:115; 75: 36).

﴿أَيَحْسَبُ الإنسَانُ أَن يُتْرَكَ سُدًى ﴿٣٦﴾﴾ {القيامة}

"Does Man think that he will be left uncontrolled, (without purpose)?" (75:36)

The Religious Truth gains distinction in the Qur'an

If the religious theme remains in reality as it had always been, undoubtedly, it had realised a real progress under the form it has taken through the Qur'an. Not only because Qur'an has administered the proof in a manner proper to convince the most rigorous intellects and to make the hardest hearts vibrate. Not only because it has given its extremely comprehensive and penetrating views on the celestial and earthly whole universe and has extracted lessons of every aspect of the internal and external creation. But also the religious material itself concerning the attributes of God, the destiny of the soul and the divine sense which is characterised at the same time

by a so particular purity. This purity set it aside from any rough anthropomorphism and by a so invading force that the listener found himself at once transported to the sublime world of spirit. All this is presented in a so strong development than anywhere else.

The need of man of a practical rule

In addition to his need of knowing and believing, man needs invincibly a practical rule proper for steering his activity whether in his personal behaviour or in his relationship with others and with God. The Qur'an satisfies this need in the largest and most precise manner. It traces for every branch of the human activity a determined and clear way to follow.

The practical side in the Qur'an is so important that it is repeated frequently and in an explicit manner as a necessary condition for the final salvation and the eternal happiness. Beside its unique style in presenting these truths and explaining its doctrine material and content.

Innate Moral Feeling in Human Being

The Qur'an declared that inside everyone of us, there is an innate moralist. We recognise, we love, we admire the virtue in itself as

well as in others, even if we do not have the courage to elevate ourselves to its level. The spectacle of an indignant attitude is repugnant to us. We hate in ourselves our own faults and we always seek to justify ourselves, because we will never accept to be stigmatised by any vice whatsoever.

It is upon this more or less universal feeling of justice and injustice, of good and evil, that Qur'an relies most frequently in its predication and it is also on it that it refers in determining its practical doctrine.

Nevertheless, this natural sentiment, being not always sufficiently ardent in all men for determining their submission to the rule, it was necessary to prescribe a complete method of education relying on intelligence and reason as well as on this innate moral sense. For if this perennial feeling of good and evil was lacking, the idea of universal duty would always remain.

How did the Qur'an animate the idea of duty?

The best way for animating this idea and for making it transcend our actual sentiments is to invoke for its support the witness of competence: i.e. the sages and the saints of all times.

In fact, we do not find any moral precept reported by Qur'an as being taught by such prophet or such sage and was not retaken by it somewhere else as a duty for the Muslim community.

Do you want to see the moral laws of Moses and those of Jesus as they were pronounced in the Holy Bible? You will find them preserved preciously in the Qur'an, spread out in various suras (verses of the Quran), Meccan (revealed at Mecca) and Medinian (revealed at Al Medinah), as well as others commandments concerning also the act of heart and the exterior action as well.

Jesus had rigorously said the truth when he affirmed that he had not come "to destroy the law, or the prophets", "but to fulfil" (Matt 5:17) and that he would continue the work of moral purification already begun before him, but still was leaving place for progress and for the best.

The Qur'an confirms the prospects of Moses and Jesus, and we choose several examples which reflect the union and the integration of New and Old Testaments and the Qur'an.

The Divorce and The Retaliation in The Three Religions

To a liberty without restriction which the Pentateuch seems to allow to the husband to repudiate his wife, the Gospel seems to oppose the laxity of the bond of marriage, save for the cause of infidelity.

The same way, against the implacable demand of the murderer's blood and the reparation of any received offence by the like, in the Old Testament Jesus teaches the duty not to resist to the wicked and to pardon him.

The true moral formula, then, is that which the two Sacred Books retained apparently each one part, leaving the other part more or less implicit. The Qur'an took charge of proclaiming this integral formula:

﴿وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُم بِهِ وَلَئِن صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصَّابِرِينَ (١٢٦)﴾ {النحل}

"And if you punish, then punish them with the like of that with which you were afflicted. But if you endure patiently, verily, it is better. And endure you patiently" (16: 126).

As for the right of divorce, we ought to read the Qur'an: (4:19,128,35) to realise the

barriers which should be passed over. And to read also (2: 228-230; 65: 1-2) to know how many trials of reconciliation to be made. But the one who withdraws his decision of separation obtains the divine mercy (2:226).

﴿لِلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِن نِّسَائِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِن فَاءُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٦﴾﴾ {البقرة}

"Those who take an oath not to have sexual relation with their wives must wait for four months, then if they return (change their idea in this period), verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful". (2: 226)

Thus, the Qur'an explains the Prophets and justifies them by joining together and synthesising their works.

The Spirit of the Qur'anic Moral is the bashfulness [1]

It is common to qualify the Jewish Moral as "Law of Fear" and the Christian Moral as "Law of Love". No one, to our knowledge, had tried to extract the most dominant element of the Islamic Morale. But here it is the founder

[1] Dr. M.Draz, La Moral du Koran, abridged by Moh. Abdel-Azim.

of Islam himself who precisely determined it "Each religion has its characteristic, and that of Islam is the bashfulness". The feeling of bashfulness is a position situated between two extreme feelings but closer to the feeling of respect. It is defined: to keep aside from evil by care not to soil; not to be ashamed before oneself and before God. The respect is placed in the middle between two extreme feelings which it synthesises and attenuates: Love and Fear. Born by their marriage, it plays their double parts as stimulant and brake in the same time. Thus, it is precisely the spirit of this Qur'anic moral.

This confirms once more the principal idea of our study that the Islamic Moral theory tends to unify the different principles strictly necessary to the moral life, to harmonise them and to bring them to their equilibrium point.

The Qur'an achieves the divine edifice

There is another mission not less precious, which the Qur'an also fulfils; it is, as the Prophet said, to complete, to achieve, to crown the divine edifice which the Prophets before him had little by little erected.

Personal Virtue

At the level of the individual moral, we find in the Qur'an at least a new precept which is the abolition of the alcoholism and the drying up of its source by the suppression of any usage of intoxicating drink because of its destructive effect on reason and health.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الخَمْرُ وَالمَيْسِرُ وَالأَنصَابُ وَالأَزْلامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (٩٠) إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَن يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ العَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلاةِ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّنتَهُونَ (٩١)﴾ {المائدة}

"*O ye who believe! intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handiwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper. Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: will ye not then abstain?*" *(5:90-91)*

We find also a principle, it is that which concerns the moral intention.

For exhorting his people, Moses made glittering to their eyes the prospect of the prom-

ised country, the victory over their enemies and the benediction and abundance in all the domains of the present life. While the coming of Christ marked a new era because the promised happiness is scarcely no more anywhere in this world here below, but eyes of soul should always be elevated rather towards the heavens. Finally, the Qur'an arrived, and here it is, by a method ever constructive and never destructive, unifies both promises, and consider the aim in the absolute Good; i.e. in the moral intention. It is God Himself, Who we must have within our sight, when we are realising His Will.

﴿لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا تُنفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلأَنفُسِكُمْ وَمَا تُنفِقُونَ إِلاَّ ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لاَ تُظْلَمُونَ (٢٧٢)﴾ {البقرة}

It is not required of thee (O Messenger), to set them on the right path, but Allah sets on the right path whom He pleaseth. Whatever of good ye give benefits your own souls, and ye shall only do so seeking the "Face" of Allah. Whatever good ye give, shall be rendered back to you, and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly. (2:272)

﴿إِلاَّ ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الأَعْلَى ﴿٢٠﴾﴾ {الليل}

But only the desire to seek for the Countenance of their Lord Most High. (92:20)

The Intention

The Qur'an imposes to the obedient will, as a sole valid objective, as a unique principle which should be inspired when acting: Act "having as a unique aim God Himself". Nowhere in the Qur'an we could find this finalist expression: "Do this with a view to that" having as direct object a personal or general, sensible or moral interest.

We find in a famous Hadith (prophetic saying): "God does not accept any word which is not translated into act. But he accepts neither an act, nor a word, unless they are well-intentioned".

Hassan Al-Basri and Said Ibn Al-Joubaïr, have continued this prophetic chain and said: "Not any word, not any action are valid but with an intention. But not any word, no action, nor an intention are valid unless they are in accordance with the established tradition."

Inter-individual Virtue

With the precepts of the Pentateuch and those of the Gospel, the tree of virtue has got its leaves and branches. On the Qur'anic ground, this evergreen tree will blossom out and carry its fruits. The Qur'an added an excellent chapter on what could be called the ethical civilisation. It is a matter of a veritable code of politeness: greeting of others (4: 86).

﴿وَإِذَا حُيِّيتُم بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيباً (٨٦)﴾ {النساء}

"*When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy. Allah takes careful account of all things*". *(4:86)*,

entering houses of others (24:27-28), asking permission (24:58-59), eating at relatives houses (24:61-62), lowering one's voice (49:2-5), secret conversation (58:8-11), discretion (49:12), lowering one's gaze (24: 31) outer clothing (24:60), mode of speaking (33:32-33) entering Prophet's houses (33:53), and veiling (33:59).

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيراً مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلاَ تَجَسَّسُوا وَلاَ يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضاً أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ

أخيه مَيْتاً فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ (١٢)

{الحجرات}

"O ye who believe! avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it. But fear Allah: for Allah is Oft-Returning, Most- Merciful".(49:12)

Collective and Universal Virtue

A salient point in Judaic moral law, is that watertight partition set up between the Israelite and the non Israelite.

Christian moral law has the grand merit of making this barrier falls down. Christian love had done well when it suppressed that exclusionist aspect and replaced it by a universal fraternity.

It is the Qur'an that had solemnly concluded that happy marriage between the universal virtue and the collective virtue. The idea of a universal virtue announced by the Gospel, is developed in the Qur'an by extending it all over the different realms of life.

It teaches us, in fact, that beyond the fraternity in faith, there is the fraternity in Adam (49:10-13)

﴿يا أيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى وجعلناكم شعوباً وقبائل لتعارفوا إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم إن الله عليم خبير ﴿١٣﴾﴾

{الحجرات}

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full Knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things)." (49:13)

That diversity of religious sentiments should by no means prevent us from being charitable and benefactors towards the others (60:8), to be just with enemies (5:2, 8).

﴿لا ينهاكم الله عن الذين لم يقاتلوكم في الدين ولم يخرجوكم من دياركم أن تبروهم وتقسطوا إليهم إن الله يحب المقسطين ﴿٨﴾﴾

{الممتحنة}

"Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and

justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just." (60:8)

It is forbidden to Muslims to lend with interest to anyone whosoever (2:275). The one who is pious and just in the bosom of the community is equally so outside it. (3:75-76). Particular care should be taken for delivering their brothers in captivity (4: 92) and for setting slaves in general at liberty (5: 89) (2:177; 90:13).

﴿لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَالْمَلائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ (١٧٧)﴾ {البقرة}

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practise regular charity, to fulfil the contracts

which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing. (2:177)

International and Inter-confessional Virtue

This is a completely new chapter in the Islamic Moral. Neither Judaism nor Christianity, at the time of their founders have had the occasion of maintaining relations with adverse states, whereas Muhammad was in constant contact with nations and confessions sometimes hostile and sometimes peaceful.

These particular circumstances had necessitated a moral legislation stipulating the conditions to peace and war. The legitimate war is that takes a defensive position (2:190) and which should cease as soon as the enemy aggression ceases (4:90; 8:61).

﴿وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلاَ تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (١٩٠)﴾ {البقرة}

Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors.(2:190)

Concluded treaty must be loyally and piously

respected (16: 91-92). If the adversary begins to betray our pact, we do not have the right to attack him before warning him (8:58). Beside that, the rules had been already established by the Hadith.

﴿وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدتُّمْ وَلاَ تَنقُضُوا الأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلاً إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ (٩١)﴾

{النحل}

"Fulfil the Covenant of Allah when ye have entered into it, and break not your oaths after ye have confirmed them: indeed ye have made Allah your surety; for Allah knoweth all that ye do." (16: 91)

The origin of the Qur'an

The idea of its divine origin not only makes a part of its doctrine but also is the most fundamental part of it. From beginning to end, the Qur'an speaks to the Prophet or about him and never leaves him express his own thought.

Muhammad was not, without doubt, the first to pose the problem of Revelation. He was even more modest in this respect than Moses who received the Pentateuch, as the Qur'an confirms, in a direct communication with the

Eternal, whose word had been heard by him. While, for Muhammad, the Qur'an is the words of a celestial messenger, an intermediary between God and him. Apart from this difference, the one and the other have one common thing that they refer to the supernatural.

﴿إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١٩﴾ ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِندَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾﴾ {التكوير}

"Verily this is the word of a most honourable Messenger, Endued with Power, with rank before the Lord of the Throne, With authority there, (and) faithful to his trust." (81:19-21)

Interrogation

Let us ask simply whether the ideas the Qur'an contains cannot be explained by any way other than the revelation. In all times, researches of this sort were carried out, so that the modern investigations are only developing and repeating, under another form, the same trials of the past.

Searching for the Sources in the Meccan Period

The simplest theory is that which tries to find in the restricted milieu of Hedjâz - if

not in Mecca - all the necessary elements for building the Qur'anic doctrine.

Time of Ignorance: Despite the fact that their life was that of "manifest error" (3:164; 62:2) and that was "the time of ignorance" (33:33; 48:26), the Arabs conserved in their practices some survivals of the patriarchal religion; for example the rite of pilgrimage.

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولاً مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ (٢)﴾ {الجمعة}

It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest error. (62:2)

﴿إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيماً (٢٦)﴾ {الفتح}

While the Unbelievers got up in their hearts heat and cant - the heat and cant of Ignorance- Allah sent down His Tranquillity to His

Messenger and to the Believers, and made them stick close to the command of self-restraint; and well were they entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allah has full knowledge of all things. (48:26)

But those very survivals were mixed with errors and superstitions (2:189,200). And in the annual Fair of 'Okaz, the assembly was not debating about religion but on worldly glories. Hardly can we find a "religious idea" in the most celebrated poems known as "The Golden Odes".

The Hanifites: Amid this mass of corrupted ignorance, was a distinguished selected little assemblage known in the Tradition as the Hanifites - that is to say, the rebellious to the common opinion. But, after all, what was the doctrine of those Reformers, the predecessors of Muhammad?. Positively, nothing or very nearly. Simply they were discontented spirits who aspired for a sound and a sanctified religion and had "a sort of anxiety and a vague expectation".

The Sabians: There were the Sabians mentioned in the Qur'an and which the fundamental ideas and the practical principles are well known and refuted in both the Qur'an and the Hadith. Such as the divinity of the angels and

the planets and their influence on the earthy events. The pilgrimage was intended for Harrân in Iraq and not for the Ka'aba, their offerings had to be entirely burned. They prohibited the bigamy and did not observe the circumcision. Their prayers were a cult rendered to planets and performed three times a day

Thus, the paganism of Hedjaz does not provide us with a satisfactory explanation of the origin of the Qur'an.

Judeo-Christian Milieu: Perhaps, the Judeo-Christian milieu at that time sheds some light on the question.

We shall not enlarge on the story of the christian monk Bahira as a source of Muhammad's instruction.

On the other hand, it is referred to the existence of young Roman adventurers or Abyssinian negroes who were "merchants of wine or hard workers" living in the suburb of Mecca". Was it there that Muhammad had contact with the religious ideas? But the occupations of the future Prophet were known and defined by assured history either in the solitude, looking after sheep; or in the grand commerce with the caravans; or in the grand

society with the tribes leaders. In addition to the fact that those rough minds did not know their religion well, also their "foreign language" was for him a natural barrier.

The Ghassanids: We know that the Ghassanids of Syria as well as Bani El- Hârith of Nadjrân in Yemen had embraced Christianity. And that during his youth, Muhammad used to travel to Syria and to Yemen for commercial purposes.

First of all, did Muhammad really penetrated in the properly so-called Christian lands? Some occidental writers strongly doubt this because of the absence of any allusion to the external features of the Christian cult in the Qur'an whereas it speaks with much comprehension of the profound spirit of Oriental Christianity: which stands in a striking contrast with the behaviour of the Arab poets of the same epoch who had visited those countries. At the same time there are other more affirmative writers who assured that the caravans, accompanied by the future Prophet, did not led him far from souk Hobâsha, in Tuhâma, and Ghorash, in Yemen.

But let us suppose that he had contact with the Christianity of that time, would he be charmed thereof?

Taylor writes: In his “Ancient Christianity” (Vol.I, p.266) Taylor writes: “That which Muhammad and his Caliphs had met in all directions... was a superstition so abject, an idolatry so rough and shameful, ecclesiastical doctrines so arrogant, religious practices so dissolute and so childish”.

Moshiem describes: Moshiem presented a comparative description providing the contrast between the first and the last Christians. He concluded that the true religion during the VIIth century was buried under masses of senseless superstitions.

The Christian Arabs: What about the Arabs who converted to Christianity? Were they behaving better than the aboriginal Christians? No. ... Huart concluded: “How attractive the idea of the influence of the Christian religion practice in Syria on Muhammad may be, it must be renounced in the presence of the incertitude of the historical bases”.

Bookish and reading milieu: But let us enlarge the field of our investigation to the auditive world and to the bookish milieu. We could suppose that Muhammad might have derived his lessons by direct reading of the previous Revelations, Judeo-Christian or others.

Did Muhammad know reading or writing?

The Qur'an answers in the negative and gives this state of illiteracy as one of the proofs of the divinity of this instruction. Not only does the Qur'an qualify the Prophet as Oummi of a people of Oummiyeen: (7:157; 3:16; 62:2), that is to say unlettered or non-instructed, (and not as Spenger wanted it, i.e. belonging to pagan people, not having received revealed scriptures) but also it affirms in clear terms that "*Neither did you* (O. Muhammad) *read a book before it* (this Qur'an) *nor did you write any book* (whatsoever)" (29:48). His adversaries themselves must certainly have recognised that defect of instruction.

﴿الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوباً عِندَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَاةِ وَالإِنْجِيلِ﴾ {الأعراف: ١٥٧}

"Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures) - in the Law and the Gospel-"(7:157)

Even if it is supposed that he knew reading, still there was another insurmountable obstacle.

That at that moment there was no Bible in Arabic neither the Ancient nor the New Testament[1].

Popular creed: Since the current ideas in that Babylon of religions did not have a unique trend and each of the pagans, the Sabians, the Mages, the Jews and the Christians were presenting the truth in his own way, to whom of them would the Prophet have to give credit?

Searching for the Sources in the Medinian Period

With the Hejira. Muhammad was transferred to a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, surrounded by his strong and devout disciples. From then on, he was in contact with a religiously organised community possessing a Holy Book : the Jews of Medina.

Position of Orientalists: Certain orientalists pushed forward their researches in the sa-

(1) cf. Leblois, ibid, p35. Professor Graf affirms that the need for an Arabic translation of the Gospel existed only in the IX[th] and X[th] centuries (The Moslem World, April 1939, article of Miss Padwick on the Origin of arabic translations). In spite of his untiring searches in various Libraries, the Abbot Chidiac says that the most ancient Arabic translation of the New Testament goes back to the XI[th] century and not before (Chidiac, Etudes sur Al- Ghazâli. Réfutation Excellente - ch.VII).

cred text of Islam. They imagined to find that a radical difference would have existed between the two periods of the Qur'anic teaching. At Mecca, Judeo-Christian legends would have remained in a state of planning.[1] At Medina, Muhammad's first contacts with the Jews would have enabled him "to be familiarised with the story of Abraham... He lived from the very beginning in the pleasant illusion that his predication -his Qur'an- corresponded entirely with the Holy Books of the Jews and the Christians. But the bitter opposition of the Jews of Medina convinced him of the contrary."[2] At the beginning, prayer was performed twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. At Medina, a third, that of the afternoon, was added "evidently for imitating the customs of the Jewish community".[3] For the same reason, the Orientation towards Jerusalem in the prayer which would be retracted later as a result of the hostility of the Israelites. Thus, political changes were affecting the ritual law. Even the conception of God would be found modified under the influence of the warlike attitude of the Medinian period: His

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(1) Massé, L'Islam p.21.

(2) Andrae, Mohamed, Sa vie et Sa Doctrine p.139. See also Lammens, L'Islam p.28.

(3) G. Demombynes, Inst. Musul. P.66 Andrae, Moh. p.81.

severity against the obstinate unbelievers was joined to the attribute of mercy".

Let us retrace our steps to see what is the matter with these observations..

Criticism: In regard to Judeo-Christian stories in general, it is in the Mekkan suras that we find accounts of the diverse episodes of the Biblical stories in their minute details. They do not leave to the Medinian period except the care of extracting the lessons and often in brief allusions.

Regarding the question of Abraham, the Mekkan suras had already mentioned it (14:37). More, they invited the Prophet Muhammad to follow the hanifite confession of Abraham (6:16; 16:123).

﴿رَّبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنتُ مِن ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِندَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلاَةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُم مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾﴾ {إبراهيم}

"O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular Prayer: so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with Fruits: so that they may give thanks." (14:37)

Did the attitude of Islam towards the precedent religions evolved in its new residence. In Mekkan suras the Qur'an invites the people who have the science of the Book to give their testimony (for ex. 13:43; 16:43):

﴿وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلاً قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيداً بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِندَهُ عِلْمُ الكِتَابِ ﴿٤٣﴾﴾ {الرعد}

The Unbelievers say: "No messenger art thou." Say: "Enough for a witness between me and you is Allah, and such as have knowledge of the Book."(13:43)

and we see it protesting against Scripture holders who followed Satan and allied with him (16:63). In return, it maintained its position at Madinah towards the savants whom it took as witnesses affirming that a number of them did not want to bear that testimony (2:121,144,146). Thus, the Qur'an makes a clear distinction between the Holy Books themselves and the Savants who followed them sincerely, and between those who called themselves Jews or Christians and did not follow but their passion. Since before Hejira, it declared, as an essential part of its mission, that it has to enlighten the people of Israel and in general, the nations who received a divine message:

﴿إِنَّ هَـٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَقُصُّ عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَكْثَرَ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ (٧٦)﴾ {النمل}

Verily this Qur'an doth explain to the Children of Israel most of the matters in which they disagree. (27:76)

and to tell them the truth regarding their disputes:

﴿وَمَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ (٦٤)﴾ {النحل}

And We sent down the Book to thee for the express purpose, that thou shouldst make clear to them those things in which they differ, and that it should be a guide and a mercy to those who believe. (16:64)

Related to the number of the prayers of Muslims, we admit that, in all the Islamic reference books which we have consulted, we have nowhere found any indication to such an evolution. It is regrettable that Occidental critics do not say from what documents they had derived that strange idea because these prayers are five in number from the first hour of their institution at Mecca.

Concerning the Qibla, there is anachronism in claiming that the replacement of that direction by that of Al- ka'ba (which is justified in the Qur'an: 2:142-150) was determined by the hostility of the Jews. That hostility began in 625 A.D whereas the definite establishment of the Qibla took place in 623 A.D

It remains the last remark regarding the Qur'anic conception of God. But what really deserves to be emphasized is the opposite of that remark. In fact, it was in the suras revealed at Mecca that "the God of war" appeared most frequently, where it is mentioned abundantly the History of the sinner Antiquity and of the terrible punishment which it suffered: implicit threat (but constant) for the cities which are following their footsteps. Moreover, the fight prescribed at Medina against the aggressors was not but the execution of an explicit ultimatum already proclaimed and repeated at Mecca (for ex. 10:102; 11:121 -2 ; 17:58).

﴿فَهَلْ يَنتَظِرُونَ إِلاَّ مِثْلَ أَيَّامِ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِهِمْ قُلْ فَانتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُم مِّنَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ (١٠٢)﴾ {يونس: ١٠٢}

Do they then expect (anything) but (what happened in) the days of the men who passed away before them? Say: "Wait ye then: for I, too, will wait with you."(10:102)

Position of Jewish Scholars: The Qur'an tells us about their attitude and divides them into two classes.

The vast majority, already hostile even before Hejira, were far from having the attitude of kind initiators.

On the other hand, a number of those Israeli savants, getting rid of their racial prejudices and personal ambitions, came to listen to the teaching of the Prophet and bore testimony of the divinity of his mission (2:121,146; 7:157; 61:6).

﴿الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلاوَتِهِ أُوْلَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ (١٢١)﴾ {البقرة}

Those to whom We have sent the Book study it as it should be studied: they are the ones that believe therein: those who reject faith therein, the loss is their own.(2:121)

The most celebrated name is that of 'Abd-Allah Ibn Salâme. Between these two categories of the hostile and the submissive, history does not leave any place for "friendly teachers"

Characteristic of the Qur'an in its exhortations to faith and virtue

In this connection, the Qur'an utilises the constant cosmological facts and calls our attention to ponder on the positive immuable laws; not only for dealing with them for their own sake but for the sole reason that they remind us of the creator. But we note that the formulas which it gives thereof, correspond exactly with the last data of science. Such as the source from which the genital element of our being springs out (86:6-7) and the different phases of our creation in mothers' wombs (12:5; 23:14);

﴿ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا العَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَاماً فَكَسَوْنَا العِظَامَ لَحْماً ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقاً آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الخَالِقِينَ (١٤) ﴾ {المؤمنون}

Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the Best to create! (23:14)

The number of the dark cavities at whose bottom the creation is accomplished (39:6); the aquatic origin of all the living beings (21:30);

the formation of the rain (30:48); the sphericity of the sky and the earth:

﴿خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ يُكَوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى أَلاَ هُوَ العَزِيزُ الغَفَّارُ (٥)﴾ {الزمر}

He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): He makes the Night overlap the Day, and the Day overlap the Night: He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law) each one follows a course for a time appointed. Is not He the Exalted in Power, He Who forgives again and again? (39:5)

The sphericity of the latter being incomplete towards the extremities (13:41; 21:44), the course of the sun towards a fixed point (36:38); the way in which animal societies in general live in collectivties not less coherent than human collectively (6:38), the description of the life of the bees (16: 68-69), the parity (the duality of sex) in plants and other creatures unknown by the world of that time (36:36; 51:49); the fertilisation by the winds (15: 22) etc ...

﴿وَمَا مِن دَابَّةٍ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلاَ طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلاَّ أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُم مَّا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الكِتَابِ مِن شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ (٣٨)﴾

{الأنعام}

There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have We omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end.(6:38)

﴿وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيَاحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَا أَنتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾ {الحجر}

And We send the fecundating winds, then cause the rain to descend from the sky, therewith providing you with water (in abundance), though ye are not the guardians of its stores. (15:22)

But the value of the Qur'an is not only in what it says, but in what it refrains from saying, (the soul? For ex. 17:85).

The above notions have been scientifically proved after long researches throughout historical epochs and generations, and through the participation of specialists each in his limited branch. Is this a mere coincidence? Is it possible that, at the epoch of ignorance, a man, deprived of all technical equipment, might treat matters of so various sciences and, give us universal and eternal formulas on each subject without failing even after fourteen centuries?

Previsions of Future Events

In addition, the Qur'an announced subsequent events which were realised punctually just as it had foreseen. Such as the three changes of attitude of its adversaries and the vicissitudes of fate which they encountered. That very defeat which they suffered at Badr in the second year of Hejira, had been announced many years before Hejira as it must occur simultaneously with that of the Persians by the Romans (30:3-5),

﴿غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ (٢) فِي أَدْنَى الأَرْضِ وَهُم مِّنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ (٣) فِي بِضْعِ سِنِينَ للهِ الأَمْرُ مِن قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (٤) بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنصُرُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ العَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ (٥)﴾ {الروم}

The Romains have been defeated. In a land close by: but they, (even) after (this) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious, within (three to nine) years. The decision of the matter, before and after (these events) is only with Allah. And on that Day, the believers will rejoice. With the help of Allah. He helps whom He will, and He is Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.(30:3-5),

A stab of sword which Al-Walid Ibn Al-Mughîra received on his nose (68:16), the

Qur'an has assured not only its near triumph and the permanence of its doctrine (13:17); (14:24), but even the foundation of the rising empire of Islam on the earth (24:55) and the inability of all the earthly forces to annihilate it (8:36).

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذينَ آمَنُوا منكُمْ وَعَملُوا الصَّالحَات لَيَسْتَخْلفَنَّهُمْ في الأَرْضِ كَمَـا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذينَ من قَبْلهمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دينَهُمُ الَّذي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّنْ بَعْد خَوْفهمْ أَمْناً يَعْبُدُونَني لاَ يُشْرِكُونَ بي شَيْئاً وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلكَ فَأُوْلَئكَ هُمُ الفَاسقُونَ (٥٥)﴾ {النور}

"Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion, the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace: 'They will worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me.' If any do reject Faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked" (24:55).

The future of Christianity: its eternal schism (5:14) the dispersion of the Israelites on the earth, their being an object of persecution and their constant need of an ally (7:167-168;

3:112); the superiority of the Christians over the Jews till the Day of resurrection (3: 55) etc... etc ...

Thus the past, the present, the future in the realm of reality adapt themselves with the world of ideas and contribute to confirm it. What must we conclude thereof ? One of the two things: either God deceives us when He leaves all the signs of veracity in favour of this man without giving us the necessary light for discovering him , or there has been a pact with the Providence by which He has been looking after that teaching for safeguarding it from any error, as being revealed by God and Muhammad is its transmitter to the whole universe:

﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيراً (١)﴾ {الفرقان}

Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures;(25:1)

﴿وَقُلِ الحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ سَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ فَتَعْرِفُونَهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ (٩٣)﴾ {النمل}

And say: "Praise be to Allah, Who will soon show you His Signs, so that ye shall know them"; and thy Lord is not unmindful of all

that ye do.(27:93)

﴿وَمَا هُوَ إِلاَّ ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾ {القلم: ٥٢}

But it is nothing less than a Message to all the worlds. (68:52)

The Prophecy of Muhammad in the Bible[1]

In the Book of Deutoronomy, Prophet Moses was quoted about the characteristic of the expected Prophet: "And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken, I will raise them a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deut. 18:17-18)

These words were addressed to the Israelites. (descendants of Abraham through his second son Isaac) and the word "the most notable 'brethren" means the Ishmaelites (descendants of Abraham through his first son Ishmael).

(1) Muhammad in the Bible, Dr. Jamal Badawi

On the other hand, the Old Testament refers to the Israelites as being "brothers" of Ishmaelites.

Description of the Prophet[1]

"Like unto Moses" It is sometimes contended that the Prophet "like unto Moses" was Jesus. At first, Jesus himself was an Israelite, not of the "brethren" of the Israelites. This fact alone suffices to show that this particular prophecy is not about the coming of Jesus, but about another Prophet "like unto Moses". That Prophet could have been none but Prophet Muhammad.

Following is a comparison which may clarify the identity of "that Prophet" who was to come after Moses

[1] The Qur'an confirms this "*We have sent to you a Messenger* (Muhammad) *to be a witness over you, as We did send a Messenger* (Moses) *to Pharaoh*" (37:15).

Area of Comparison	Moses	Muhammad	Jesus
Birth	Usual	Usual	Unusual
Family Life	Married, Children	Married, Children	No marriage or children
Death	Usual	Usual	Unusual
Career	Prophet, Statesman	Prophet, Statesman	Prophet
Forced Emigration (in adulthood)	To Median	To Madinah	None
Encounter with enemies	Hot pursuit	Hot pursuit and Battles	No similar encounter
Results of encounter	Moral physical Victory	Moral physical Victory	Moral Victory
Nature of teachings	Spiritual legal	Spiritual legal	mainly Spiritual
Acceptance of leadership (by his people)	Rejected then accepted	Rejected then accepted	Rejected (by most Israelites)

The meaning of: "and will put my words in his mouth" is a vivid description of the type of revelation received by Muhammad. Angel Gabriel used to come and dictate to him specific portions of the Qur'an which were then repeated by Prophet Muhammad exactly as he has heard them:

﴿وَمَا يَنطِقُ عَنِ الهَوَى (٣) إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ وَحْيٌ يُوحَى (٤)﴾ {النجم}

"He, (Muhammad) does not speak of his own desire, it is no less than a revelation sent down to him". (53:3-4).

Numerous passages in the Qur'an command Muhammad in such terms as: "...Say; ...Remind; ...Inform". Other passages in the Qur'an start with such expressions as "And your Lord said". Still in other passages, it reads "and they ask you (Oh Muhammad).. Say..."

The above analysis fits not only Deut. 18:18, but is also consistent with the subsequent verses. For example 18:19 reading: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him".

It is interesting to note that 113 out of the 114 surahs (Chapters) of the Qur'an starts

with "In the name of Allah (God), Most Gracious, Most Merciful". The very first passage of the Qur'an revealed to Prophet Muhammad reads:

﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (١)﴾ {العلق}

"Read in the name of your Lord who created..." (96:1)

What is the attitude of Islam towards other Religions

The sense of "Islam" in the Qur'anic acception: If we consider the word "Islam" in its Qur'anic meaning, there would no good reason to pose such a question. As in the Qur'anic language the word Islam is not the name of a special religion, but rather of the common religion which is the contribution of all the Prophets and to which disciples of all Prophets had adhered to. That is why we find the word Islam as a general emblem repeated on all the Prophets Tongues and their disciples since the very ancient historic time up to the epoch of Muhammad: Noah (10:72); Jacob sons (2:133); Moses (10:84) Jesus Apostles (3:52) a group of the people of the Book (28:53)

﴿شَرَعَ لَكُم مِّنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحاً وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلاَ تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَن يُنِيبُ (١٣)﴾ {الشورى}

"He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion which He ordained for Noah, and that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) and that which We ordained for Abraham, Moses and Jesus saying: 'You should establish religion; and make no divisions'" (42:13).

Then Islam in the Qur'anic sense could never be subject of such a question. Because we don't ask about the relation of a thing with itself; where unity is integral and indivisible.

Customary sense of Islam: But in human custom, the word Islam has taken a completely different meaning, that is to say: the whole Laws and Prescriptions brought by the Prophet Muhammad. And in turn, the word Judaism concerns Moses Law and the word Chrisianism refers to Jesus Law. Therefore, the question posed becomes about the relation between the Muhamadism, the Judaism and the Christianism.

The Answer

To give an answer thereof, we shall divide our search into two phases:

1- The relation of Muhammedan doctrine with the precedent revealed religions as they were in their primitive situation, before to be far from their source and to suffer changing by the action of time or hands of men.

2- This relation after a very long time has elapsed and those religions have been the subject of some alterations.

Its attitude in the 1st phase: the Qur'an teaches us that each Prophet sent and each Book revealed, confirm and justify what preceded them. But this justification is of two sorts:

1- To confirm what is ancient and to allow its persistence and its continuation.

2- To confirm what is ancient and to maintain it in its past and temporary limits and circumstances.

Two sorts of legislation: The revealed laws include two kinds: (1) eternal legislation which never change by the time and place. Suppose

that the disciples of a precedent legislation have neglected this eternal legislation, the posterior legislation comes to remind them thereof and to confirm it.

On the other hand, there is (2) a temporary legislation, consecrated for limited periods and which is supposed to end at a fixed term. While the next legislation comes and contains what is more suitable and more adaptable with the new circumstances.

It is an advantage that the revealed revelations contain these two sorts, otherwise we would never had found the two indispensable elements for the prosperity of the human society: element of continuation which binds the present and the past of the humanity, and element of constitution and of renovation which prepare the present for the development and the progress with a view to a better and more complete future.

Thus the divine legislations are progressive steps and superposed stones in the edifice of religion, of virtue and of society organisation and that the message of the last stone is to achieve the construction, the fill up the existing gap and to tighten the building corners. The Prophet told the truth when he depicted the divine messages in their whole, saying:

“My example and that of the Prophets who preceded me, resembles that of a man who has built a house, beautified it and brought it to perfection save the place of one stone. Then people were turning around the house won-dered and saying: this stone does it not deserve to be posed? Well, it is me this stone and I am the seal of the Prophets”.

It has been then a wise policy followed by the Providence in view to educate humanity by a progressive style towards progress, perfec-tion and prosperity.

Its attitude in the last phase: For consider-ing this relation concerning those legislation after the elapse of time and after they submit-ted to a sort of development and liberation. We have seen in the precedent phase that the Qur’an declared about itself that it has been set down in order to “*confirm the Scripture that came before it...*” and we notice that it announced that it has come too “... *and guard-ing it in safety...*” (5: 48) that is to say, as a faithful guardian upon these Books.

﴿وَأَنزَلْـــنَا إِلَـــيْكَ الكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقاً لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الكِتَاب
وَمُهَيْمِـــناً عَلَـــيْه فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلاَ تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا
جَـــاءَكَ مِـــنَ الحَقِّ لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجاً وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِن لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعاً فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

{المائدة}

To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth that hath come to thee. To each among you have We prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single People, but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you; so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute; (5:48).

Mission of the faithful guardian: The task of the faithful guardian upon these Books is not only to be satisfied by the confirmation of what is true and good and which history had rendered eternal thereof, but he must, in addition to that, protect them from what is strange and which may come to illegitimately join them, and also put in relief the truths which could have been concealed.

Conclusion

Then the relation of Islam with revealed religions in their first stage is the absolute confirmation and approval. As for that relation in their last stage, it is to confirm what remained intact from the original parts, and to correct what had occurred as strange aberrations and supplement.

This characteristic is the nature of Islamic faith, that is to say, the character of equity and elucidation which requires from every Muslim to accept nothing in bloc and to refuse whatsoever in lot. But to act always with clear-sightedness, having at hand supporting proof to justify what he accepts or he refuses. This attitude of the Islamic doctrine is not reserved for the revealed religions, but it is rather its attitude towards any opinion, any faith, any cannon legislation and any religion.

The attitude of Islam practically

That which preceded explains the attitude of Islam through the theoretical side. What is then its practical attitude? Must it keep silent towards these religions and to take no notice thereof? Or it should take the position of a fierce combatant who cannot rest before deliv-

ering the world from them and from their disciples?

The opinion of the Orientalists: A limited number among them, answers with the first part of the question. Amid them Gautier in his book "Mœurs et Institutions des Musulmans".

Whereas the majority respond with the second part. In their opinion, Islam would desire to impose its doctrine on mankind with drawn sword. According to them, the Qur'an itself would ordered the Muslim to kill the unbeliever wherever he could find him"

The true Attitude: Certainly, the two parties have missed the truth when imagining the attitude of Islam.

Islam has never been indifferent and retiring within itself, as some are pretending. Because preaching to truth and to good represents one of the most fundamental bases of Islam, as well as a permanent task for all time and place.

﴿وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلاً مِّمَّن دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (٣٣)﴾ {فصلت}

"And who is better in speech than who calls (men) to Allah, works righteousness, and says " I am one of the Muslims" (41:33)

﴿وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾﴾ {آل عمران}

"Let there arise up of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is wright and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones who are the successful" (3:104).

﴿وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الإِنسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾﴾ {سورة العصر}

"Verily, man is in loss, except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth, and recommend one another to patience" (103:1-3).

But Islam is not also, as the majority of Orientalists want it, violent and bloody. It is not among its aims to impose itself by force on mankind in view to be the sole world religion. Islam has understood very early that any attempt to impose a unique world religion is an unsuccessful project, and against the nature of things:

﴿وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾﴾ {هود}

"And if your Lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one community (of

one confession), *but they will not cease to dispute (11:118).*

﴿وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ (١٠٣)﴾ {يوسف}

"*Yet the greater part of mankind will not believe, however ardently your desire is*" *(12:103).*

﴿وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَآمَنَ مَن فِي الأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيعاً أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ (٩٩)﴾ {يونس}

"*If it has been your Lord will, all who are on earth would have believed, will you then compel mankind, against their will, until they become believers*" (10:99)

﴿إِنَّكَ لاَ تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (٥٦)﴾ {القصص}

"*You (Muhammad) are not able to guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills*" (28: 56).

The Basic Rule: Hence, the Islamic basic rule emanates as declared by the Qur'an: The rule of the freedom of the faith "*Let there be no compulsion in religion*" *(2: 256)*. Besides, the Qur'an determines the manner of preaching for the way of God, lays down its sound method so that it could be effected in virtue of proof and good advice with kindness and

clemency “*Invite* (mankind) *to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching and argue with them in a way that is better*” *(17:125)*.

Treatment of paganism and the other Religions: The Qur’an does not stop there. But it suggests the golden recommendation for the treatment of paganism which is the most distant religion from Islam.

﴿وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لاَّ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦﴾﴾ {التوبة}

“*If one among the pagans seeks your protection, grant it to him so that he may hear the word of Allah, and then escort him to where he can be secure*” *(9:6)*.

We see it not only satisfied to protect pagans, to give them asylum, to guarantee their security, to guide them to the truth and to the path of good, but it ordains us to assure to them our protection and to take care of them during their displacement until they reach the place in which they will be sheltered from any aggression. In addition to the Islamic rule which asserts to the non-Muslims who live in the country of Islam, the freedom of faith and of their customs, the protection of their persons, their properties and their honour. But what is more, it allows to them the same Mus-

lims public rights: "They have rights as more as we have. And they assume obligations as more as we assume".

An attitude full of Mercy, of Good and of Justice: Such is the doctrine of the Qur'an which is not merely content in determining the relation between Islamic nations and those who do not embrace Islam, as the exchange of peace for peace:

﴿وَإِن جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ (٦١)﴾ {الأنفال}

"*But if they incline towards peace, you also decline to it*" *(8:61)*. "*So if they withdraw from you, and fight not against you, and offer you peace, then Allah has opened no way for you against them*" *(4:90)*.

But it also requires from Muslims that their attitude towards non-Muslims be that of mercy, of good and of justice "*Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fight you not for (your) religion nor drive you out of your homes. For Allah loves those who deal with equity*" (60: 8)

How does the Occident interpret the first victories of Islam [1]

The victories gained by Islam in the beginning and its expansion all over the world, have incited occidental man to pretend that Islam is an aggressive religion which had expanded with sword.

Verily the reasons of these victories and that expansion are quite different. Among others, we quote out that that small group of Muslims, small in number and reduced in material force, were hardly capable to conquer all those countries and all those kingdoms if their people had not embraced willingly the Islam group after group. That is to say the Heretics who had derogated the consensus of the Occidental church, Christians of Maghred and of Orient. Besides the Christians so called Arians and Donatians who embraced Islam because it is in concordance with their believes which rejected the divine nature of Jesus and the trinity. For example, the Negus did not see, since his first meeting with Muslims Muhadjirines at 614. A.D, any contradiction between the Islam view regarding Jesus and his mother and Christianism of that time.

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(1) ("الإسلام كبديل" Islam as a substitute) Dr Mourad Hoffmann, translated into Arabic by Gharib M. Gharib.

Reciprocal love [1]

The mutual love between believers is one of the most great divine favours that God never ceases to recall to the Muslims:

﴿وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعاً وَلاَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَاناً
وَكُنتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ (١٠٣)﴾ {آل عمران}

"... *and remember* [with gratitude] *Allah's favour on you, for you were enemies one to anther but he joined your hearts in love, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren..." (3:103).*

Love exchanged with all mankind is one of the most precious hope that Qur'an had widely opened before Muslims "*Perhaps Allah will make friendship between you and those whom you hold as enemies. For Allah has power* (over all things) *and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (60:7).*

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[1] Dr. M. Draz, Speech of Al-Azhar in religions World Congress.

Reunion and Intimacy

The very idea of reunion and intimacy in Islam's eyes is full of sacredness. As the best day to Muslims is "Friday" (Al-Jum'a) which mean is reunion. Besides, the best place to them is the "Mosque" (Al-Jami'), the place destined for meeting for the Unique God worship.

A Nation compound of three Elements

One of the first act performed by the Prophet upon his arrival at Al-Madinah after Hejire, was to conclude a pact with Jews and to establish brotherhood between the Muhadjirines and the Ansârs. He so instituted at Al-Madinah one sole nation from three elements different in race and in religion, where, Muslims, pagans and Jews were equal in rights of alliance, of good neighbourhood and of mutual help in resistance to ravishers.

Also among his last acts, was his conciliation with Christians of Nadjrâne and their admission with their religion in the bosom of the Arab-Islamic fatherland.

The day of the Conquest of Makkah

Another edifying act of the Prophet was in the day of the conquest of Maccah towards the Quraïchites who had declared war against him for more than twenty years. After he conquered them, and they admitted defeat, and still pagans, he told them: "Go, you are quite free". Besides, he liberated in the same time more than 6000 pagans prisoners. All that is in compliance with magnanimous examples that Islam had traced in the realm of tolerance and forgetfulness of the past and not to pursue the enemy soldiers who run away from battle-field calling for peace and security;

﴿يَـا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلاَ تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَى إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِناً تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِندَ اللَّـهِ مَغَانِمُ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنتُم مِّن قَبْلُ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيراً (٩٤)﴾ {النساء}

"*... and say not to anyone who greets you (by embracing Islam)": "You are not believer" seeking the perishable goods of the worldly life....*" (4:94).

What do the three Religions require from mankind

All the religions - instead of to be a raison of discord and of dispute in the matters of these world - on the contrary, they call for understanding and union. That is why, the real motives of the disputes which we see prevailing today in our actual world, reveals the deviation of people far from their own religions and never their adhesion as they pretend. And that every group who tries to put fire of the war under the name of the religion and under the emblem of principles and faith of the religion, is a group of liars in their religious pretentions. As by their very pretentions, they derogate their own religion and remove away therefrom.

What is the remedy of today?

To our opinion, the sole remedy of the actual diseases of humanity is:

1- That the religious clergy of every religion pay a particular attention to the moral side of their own religion, by developing in their disciples the feeling of human

fraternity in the name of their very religion.

2- If this rapprochement and co-operation, this mutual respect and love, will be realised on a general human plan, it would be an edifying step in the reciprocal understanding about the religious truths themselves. By that, the great hope to lighten the theoretical divergences between the religions will be realised and a friendly and impartial atmosphere will be created and will lead to understand the "Truth" and the "Virtue" by the free search and lighted spirit.

Islam and Peace

The very name of Islam and the word As-Salam (peace) are of the same elliptic root in the Arabic language. On the other hand, the must amiable greeting to Muslims is the prayer of As-salam (peace), which is the object of Qur'anic order to believers "... *Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and saluted those in them*" *(24:27)*

Also God greeting to believers on the Day of the Resurrection

﴿تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلامٌ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ أَجْراً كَرِيماً (٤٤)﴾ {الأحزاب}

"Their salutation on the Day they shall meet Him-will be "Salâm": Peace", and He has prepared for them a generous Reward. (33: 44);

﴿سَلامٌ قَوْلاً مِّن رَّبٍّ رَّحِيمٍ (٥٨)﴾ {يس}

"Salâm (peace on you) - *a Word from the Lord (Allah), Most Merciful" (36:58).*

World Co-operation for Peace and the Messenger of Peace

We would summarise the noble attitude that Islam practically reserves to people other than its disciples which is: that Islam does not spare any effort at any time for helding out its friendly hand for greeting the disciples of all religion, all sect, in view to co-operate for the establishment of justice, for spreading abroad security, for saving blood, for protecting the inviolable things even according to conditions which could include certain exaggerations.

The Prophet set to us a good example in this connection on the occasion of the Pact of Al-Hodaïbia when he said: "I swear by God, if the tribe of Quraïche invites me to conclude a plan, by which ties of kinship will be solidified and the inviolable things will be sanctified, I would willingly give it to them".

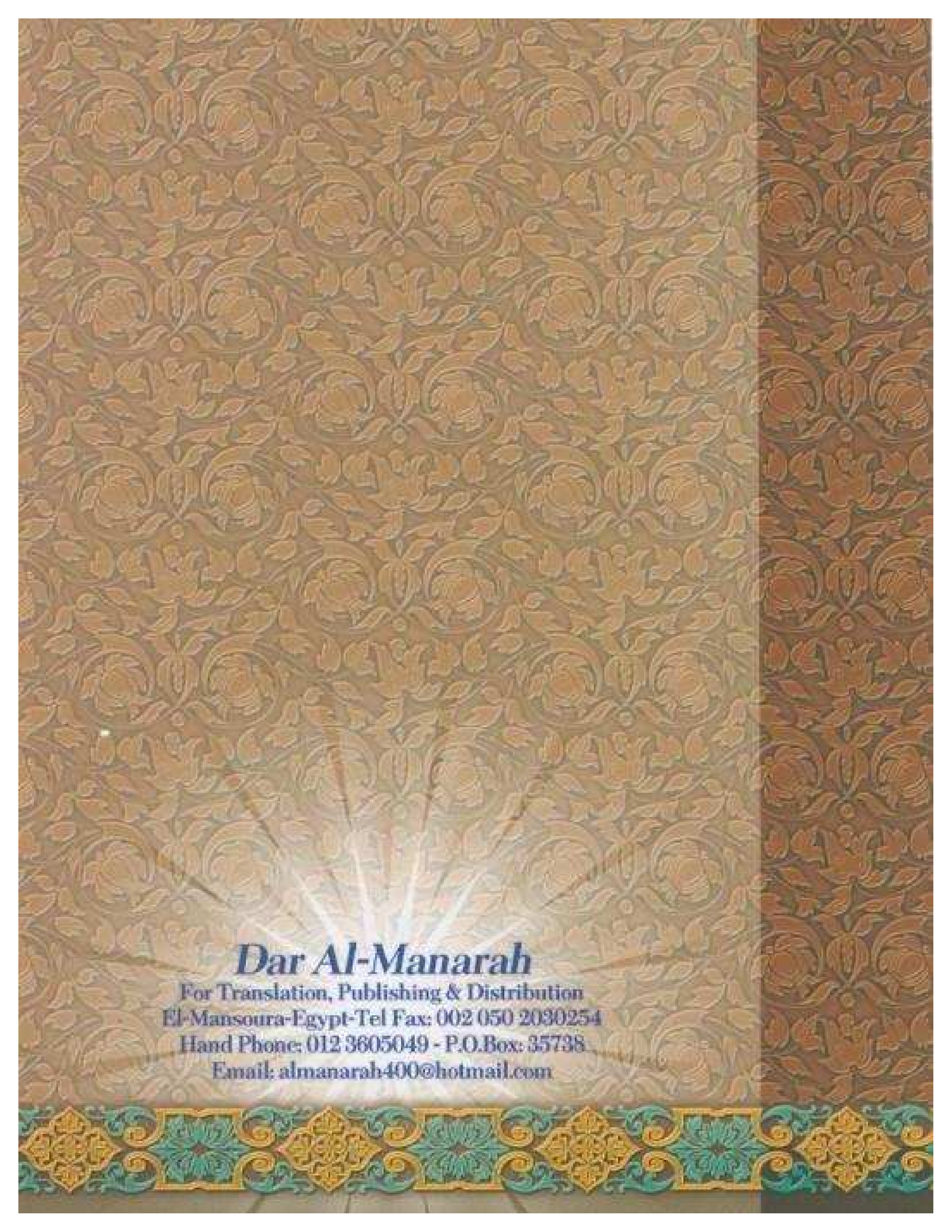
Here it is therefore the principle of world co-operation for peace, declared by the Prophet of Islam ... the Messenger of Peace.

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